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ABSTRACT

A study attempted to measure the extent to which journalists feel free to express their opinions, the extent to which they perceive their views on issues represent a minority position in the community, and the degree to which memberships in organizations outside the newsroom affect their attitudes or actions. Subjects, 326 respondents from a random sample of 875 members of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, answered questionnaires which tested ten hypotheses pertaining to high or low participation in community organizations, comparing the responses of "young transients" with those of "older natives," and testing the spiral of silence theory in which perceived disagreement with one's views might inhibit speaking out. Results supported none of the hypotheses which tested behavioral or attitude differences between respondents who were active in community groups and those with little community involvement. Neither did perceived disagreement with respondents' views prove inhibiting to speaking out on issues. Journalists followed a private-to-public continuum on topics covered in the questionnaire. The most private topic was personal religious conviction and the most public was the respondent's news organization's daily performance. (Seven tables of data are included; 43 footnotes, the survey instrument, and further data are appended.) (RS)

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ABSTRACT

Linkages Between Journalists' Community Associations, Attitudes and Expression of Viewpoints on Selected Issues

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The study secured responses from 326 journalists who were part of a sample randomly taken from 18,000 members of Society of Professional Journalists, SDX. Ten hypotheses were tested pertaining to high or low participation in community organizations, comparing responses of "young transients" with those of "older natives," and testing the spiral of silence theory in which perceived disagreement with one's views might inhibit speaking out.

The data did not support any of the hypotheses which tested behavioral or attitude differences between respondents who were active in community groups and those with little community involvement. Nor did perceived disagreement with respondents' views prove inhibiting to speaking out on issues. In fact, those who sensed associates to be "neutral" to their views were much less likely to speak out.

As expected, "young transients" were not as active in community organizations as were "older natives" and were less likely to perceive community agreement with their views. Both groups had similar attitudes about journalist-community linkages. Contrary to what was expected, "young transients" were more likely to express their personal religious convictions than "older natives."

Journalists followed a private-to-public continuum on topics covered by the questionnaire in responses dealing with the news room. Most private of the topics was personal religious conviction. More than half of the respondents rated associates "neutral" to their beliefs (more likely "don't know") and only 20% recalled talking about their religious beliefs in the newsroom in the past year. Next in the private-to-public progression were: View on combatting AIDS, choice for president, conflicts of interest between personal and professional life, and sexual discrimination in the workplace. The most publicly treated item was the respondent's news organization's daily performance. On this item, virtually all of the respondents perceived agreement with their views and only 9% failed to recall a time in which they expressed their views on the subject during the past year.

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Mass Communication and Society Division
AEJMC, Portland, Oregon July 1988

Linkages Between Journalists' Community Associations, Attitudes and Expression of Viewpoints on Selected Issues

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Independence from outside influences is a valued ethical principle among journalists, and yet perceived distance between journalists and their communities has been identified as a potential source of media credibility problems.(1)

Newsgatherers argue that they are trained to be immune from outside pressure, including sources and advertisers, in deciding what is news and how it should be treated. Journalists perceive this independence as working for the benefit of their audiences, and yet a 1982 Newspaper Research Project found that journalists tended to underestimate readers' news interests and to hold a condescending view of their audiences.(2)

This perceived distance between journalists and their communities has also been reflected in public attitudes. A 1985 study by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that one of the sources of newspaper credibility problems was the distance people felt between themselves and their newspapers.(3)

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A case study of attitudes of journalists at two newspapers showed that 8 of 10 journalists agreed "it's important for people who work for newspapers to know a lot of people in the community," but only 2 in 10 of the same respondents agreed "it's important for people who work for newspapers to be involved in community organizations."(4) Community awareness without the role conflicts possible from outside group affiliations seemed to be the most acceptable attitude.

This concern about the influence of outside pressures seems to ignore another set of pressures, those generated internally. More than three decades have passed since Breed studied social control in the newsroom, but his conclusion still appears relevant:

> ...The newsman's source of rewards is located not among the readers, who are manifestly his clients, but among his colleagues and superiors. Instead of adhering to societal and professional ideals, he redefines his values to the more pragmatic level of the newsroom group. He thereby gains not only status rewards, but also acceptance in a solidarity group engaged in interesting, varied, and sometimes important work.(5)

This study seeks to apply to the newsroom two communication processes and effects models typically applied to mass media audiences. One posits that "reference group" associations affect the attitudes and actions of members by serving as a standard for self-evaluation or as a source of personal values or goals.(6) The other, the "spiral of silence," contends that an individual's fear of isolation is more compelling than his or her own judgments when controversial issues are discussed.(7)

Using a survey of a systematic random sample of 875 members of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, this study attempts to identify some of the constraints respondents feel are placed upon them in newsroom or community settings. Broadly, it will attempt to measure the extent to which respondents feel free to express their opinions, the extent to which they perceive their views on issues represent a minority position in either the newsroom or in the community, and the degree to which memberships in organizations outside the newsroom affect their attitudes or actions.

Background: Journalists' Relations with Community

The interaction of journalists with the community is a matter of some ambivalence. One on hand are fears of conflicts of interest developing through such relationships. Many formal or informal codes encourage journalists to avoid such potential personal entanglements. On the other hand is the concern that journalists will hold themselves so aloof from normal personal relationships that they will become insular. Journalists may so distance themselves from community associations that they are perceived as arrogant by those who consider community participation an important part of citizenship.

One of the cornerstones of libertarian thought is that the press must remain independent of government so that it can perform its watchdog role of checking upon and criticizing actions of public officials when necessary.(8) While it may be appropriate

for journalists to be skeptical, even to the point of antagonism, of public officials, most journalistic codes suggest that neutrality is the desired stance for the media in coverage of other institutions.

The Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, states that "journalists must be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know the truth."(9)

Functional definitions of such codes seem more pertinent for journalists with active, identifiable roles in community associations rather than simple membership of such groups. Howard Simons, former managing editor of The Washington Post, defined the unwritten policy of the Post thus:

> As our Style book makes clear, we avoid active involvement in causes of any kind--politics, community affairs, social action, demonstrations--that could compromise, or seem to compromise, our ability to report and edit with fairness. Although it has become increasingly difficult for this newspaper to do so since Watergate, reporters should make every effort to remain in the audience, to stay off the stage, to report history, not to make history.(10)

Schneider and Gunter found newspaper guidelines, codes and policies reflected a general ambivalence about journalists' role conflicts. Codes were more strict for those in the newsroom than for management or other employees. In most cases, decisions on role conflict were situational and based upon conflicts that were obviously visible.(11)

While some journalists contend that the isolation of the press from community association is essential for press credibility, dissenting voices are heard. Schneider and Gunter concluded an analysis of newsroom ethics codes by observing:

> The danger is that news organizations, in their zeal to demonstrate their purity, will reach too far into the personal lives of their employees by regulating outside activities that pose no real conflict. Reshuffling newsroom assignments in the face of possible conflict might be a fairer solution than prohibiting political or civic activities.(12)

Institutional pressures against journalist involvement in community activities are thus ambiguous. This middle-ground approach is reflected in the views expressed 13 years ago by Joseph W. Shoquist, managing editor of The Milwaukee Journal:

> Obviously, some outside associations are more of a problem than others, and no one would suggest that all such contact be forbidden. Common sense is required.
>
> The whole question of a journalist's involvement with public affairs is a difficult one. No one really has the right answer. There are strong reasons why we should remain detached and aloof, and there are perfectly good arguments in favor of active participation in social, business and community affairs.(13)

In a 1986 ethics survey conducted by the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, most respondents questioned the advisability of paid positions, elected office, political party posts and direct conflicts with the journalists' beats, but they generally favored volunteer community involvement.(14)

Research on non-monetary conflicts of interest revealed four distinct types emerging from a factor analysis of the data: political ties, family ties, history of antagonism toward sources, and history of affinity toward sources. McAdams found three types of conflicts--politics, family and antagonism--scored toward the "harmful" end of a scale, while ties of affinity to sources were regarded as "helpful."(15)

This finding contradicts stereotypes of journalists as adversaries. It appears from the data that antagonism toward sources is held in low esteem, while many respondents see affinity as an asset. Only 1 percent of responses categorized affinity toward sources a hindrance to reporters, while more than 96 percent of respondents ranked such ties as "helpful."(16)

McAdams concludes that few generalizations can be made about non-monetary conflicts. Expressed judgments vary due to differences in individual situations and perceptions.

> ...A powerful ethic that is not published and resists codification does appear to be at work in the newsroom. It is based on a synthesis of the individual's perceptions of good business, good newsgathering, good public relations and good conduct...
>
> The trust among journalists of one another's gut feelings may be a reflection of the fact that journalists live in glass houses. Every journalist has had some connections outside the profession and therefore justly fears criticizing a colleague's outside ties lest he be similarly judged.(17)

The connections journalists have outside the profession are presumed to be highly individualistic but typically "mainstream." Two studies of the basic characteristics of journalists found they came from "the established and dominant cultural groups in society."(18)

A recent study by Burgoon, Burgoon, Buller and Atkin suggests that a majority of journalists have a fair amount of contact with the public, but that their sample was divided into four distinct types of respondents. "Isolates" had low communication with the public and low communication with other journalists, "fast trackers" had low communication with the public but high communication with other journalists, "externals" had high contact

with the public but low communication with journalists, and "talkers" had high communication with the public and other journalists.(19)

The study concluded:

> ...(T)hese two surveys provide strong evidence that a substantial subset of journalists working in many newsrooms across the country are insulated from their public. This is particularly true of editors and young staffers. The extent to which this lack of communication produces feelings of elitism and condescension toward the public may threaten the newspaper's ability to identify newsworthy developments in the community, to present accurate accounts of people and events, and to assess critically its failures and successes.(20)

In a similar study, Gaziano and McGrath found that about 4 in 10 journalists were "younger transients," whose characteristics tended to remove them farther from the public than other journalists. Fewer than 3 of 10 journalists made up "older natives," who were more likely to share many characteristics with the public. The "younger transients" were less likely than "older natives" to feel that lack of credibility with the public was a serious problem for newspapers.(21)

One of Breed's contentions in his 1955 analysis of informal social control in the newsroom was that there was "absence of conflicting group alliance" among journalists. Breed cites this and a finding of "in-groupness in the newsroom" as factors in contributing to the formation of reference group behavior.(22)

While Breed sees the publisher, "who epitomizes the policy making and coordinating role," as the ultimate source of newsroom conformity, his own analysis makes an equally good case for group solidarity among peers in the newsroom, who, he concedes, are somewhat remote from direct publisher control.

Even outside the newsroom, competing journalists often check with others on story angles. This illustrates the notion that the reporter is often "haunted by the professional necessity to validate his news sense."(23) The collaboration of journalists to produce formula stories was termed "pack journalism" by Crouse in his description of press coverage of the 1972 election.(24)

Because reporters are seen validating their judgments by checking with one another, are there areas in which such journalistic group thought might make diversity or neutrality of opinion more difficult than others?

Thomas implied so in a commentary on the 1988 presidential campaign, in which two ministers are running for president. He contended their religious ties would be a distinct disadvantage in terms of media coverage.

> ...(M)ost journalists are ill-equipped to adequately report on (Robertson and Jackson) or those who will vote for them because they are unable to identify with religious ideas, and they may be hostile or apathetic toward the people who hold them. Consequently, their judgment has been severely impaired...
>
> The problem is that many in the news business have traded our natural skepticism for cynicism when it comes to spiritual things...
>
> We have dealt with stereotypes, or with the excesses of those who profess religious commitment, or we have tried to ignore the subject altogether by dumping everything "religious" (except great controversies) into the ghetto of the religion page.(25)

Although Thomas believed journalists are unable to identify with religious ideals, the two broad demographic studies of journalists cited earlier found that journalists almost perfectly match the rest of society in terms of religious affiliation. There was no change from 1971 to 1982-83.(26) More than 60 percent of the journalists identified themselves as Protestant, about 25 percent as Catholic and about 6 percent as Jewish.

Because of these conflicting assertions, one of the objectives of this study was to determine the proportion of religious affiliation among respondents and the degree to which they freely expressed their religious convictions.

Background: The Spiral of Silence

The "spiral of silence"(27) offers as its central hypothesis that an individual's fear of isolation is more compelling than his or her own judgments. The individual constantly surveys his or her environment, using interpersonal communication and mass media, to determine whether his or her opinion is in the minority. The mass media, Noelle-Neumann posits, exert strong influence by portraying the opinion climate as essentially consonant. The preponderance of one opinion will cause individuals holding dissenting opinions to suppress them out of fear of isolation. Because the majority expresses itself and the minority eventually becomes silent, individuals are faced more and more with one viewpoint, contributing to a spiral of silence.

Glynn and McLeod concluded that, under certain conditions and with certain respondents, results "suggest a direct and perhaps very powerful influence on perceptions of opinions or expression of one's own opinions and on actual behavioral outcomes."(28)

Salmon and Neuwirth argue that the "spiral of silence" needs further elaboration. They conclude that opinion expression is a function of the situation in which an individual is supposed to express his or her opinion; the type or nature of the issue on which the opinion is to be expressed; demographic and

psychological characteristics of the individual; perceptions of majority opinion of an amorphous national public or society; and the salience of opinions of other groups, e.g., society as a whole versus one's own community.(29)

Attempts to replicate Noelle-Neumann's findings have had mixed success.(30) Further, in the literature on conformity that appears to underlie much of Noelle-Neumann's hypothesis, limited support is found for the spiral of silence. In the classic experiments by Solomon Asch, seven confederates would agree on a clearly wrong choice in a simple discrimination task, while the subject of the experiment chose the right answer. While Asch found strong evidence that certain subjects will agree with the majority even though the majority choice is clearly wrong, he also found that one-fourth of all subjects were completely independent of majority pressure. No subjects conformed on every trial. Asch subsequently found that if a subject had some support from anyone in the group, conformity to the majority dropped substantially.(31)

Crutchfield found that pressure to conform declines when subjects are not face to face with group members(32); Argyle concluded similarly that pressure to conform declines when group scrutiny declines.(33) In addition, Salmon and Kline cite the research literature showing the powerful influence of subgroups in mediating mass communication effects.(34) Other evidence suggests that deeply held beliefs, or beliefs of long standing, are less susceptible to manipulation.(35)

There appears to be some oblique support for the spiral of silence in the findings of interpersonal communications research. Burgoon and Ruffner summarize several: As negative feedback increases, people speak at a slower rate; people receiving positive feedback speak more rapidly. Some subjects simply speak less when their feedback is negative, suggesting they speak less to avoid the punishment associated with negative feedback.(36)

Salmon and Kline's conclusion that subgroups assert powerful influence in mediating mass communication effects seems to find support in the interpersonal communication literature about small groups. Burgoon and Ruffner define the small group as the face to face interaction of three or more individuals, for a recognized purpose such as information sharing, self-maintenance or problem-solving, such that the members are able to recall personal characteristics of the other members accurately.(37) By that definition, the newsroom staff appears to fit the small-group model, and it may also be susceptible to mediating influences such as Salmon and Kline summarize are at work with audiences.(38)

One of the most salient costs of small-group communication, Burgoon and Ruffner argue, is groupthink. They identify several features: an illusion of invulnerability; collective efforts to rationalize away warnings; an unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality; stereotyped views of others perceived to be opponents; direct pressure on any member who expresses strong arguments against any of the group's stereotypes, illusions or commitments; self-censorship by members of deviations from apparent group consensus; the emergence of self-appointed

mindguards -- members who protect the group from adverse information that might shatter its complacency about the effectiveness and morality of its own decisions.(39)

Such a description of newsroom behavior would certainly match the perception of arrogance on the part of journalists held by a substantial number of respondents in recent media credibility studies.(40)

Research Question and Hypotheses

Are group memberships or perceptions of agreement and disagreement with one's opinion associated with consistent patterns of personal attitudes or behavior in newsroom or community settings?

To explore this question, several hypotheses were developed for testing:

Hypothesis 1--Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to perceive community agreement with their views on community-wide issues.

Hypothesis 2--Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to perceive disagreement from colleagues in the newsroom with respondents' views on community issues.

Hypothesis 3--Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to perceive a conflict of interest between their personal lives and professional lives.

Hypothesis 4--Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to express their views on community issues to persons in the community.

Hypothesis 5--Respondents with high participation in professional and community groups will be more willing to express their beliefs in the newsroom than those with low participation, regardless of whether the respondent perceives support for his or her beliefs in the newsroom.

Do "young transients," with little ties to the community, have significantly different associations and community-related attitudes than "older natives," journalists with roots in a community who anticipate remaining there in the future? Three hypotheses were developed for testing such a comparison.

Hypothesis 6--Respondents identified as "young transients" will have significantly less participation than other respondents in community organizations.

Hypothesis 7--"Young transients" will be significantly less likely to perceive community agreement with their viewpoints than "older natives."

Hypothesis 8--"Young transients" will perceive more distance between themselves and the community than "older natives" on items that project respondent-community affinity.

Hypothesis 9--"Young transients" will be less likely to express their beliefs in the community than in the newsroom.

Does the spiral of silence theory apply to journalist-community relations? Does perception of disagreement by associates with one's views, in contacts within the newsroom or the community, reduce the likelihood that an individual will express his or her views on an issue? One hypothesis was developed to test such questions.

Hypothesis 10--Respondents who perceive agreement with their beliefs on an issue, either in the newsroom or the community, will be more likely to have discussed the issue in that setting than those who perceived disagreement with their views.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were mailed to a systematic random sample of 875 names from a mailing list of more than 18,000 members of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi. The questionnaire filled both sides of a legal-sized page. (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.) The first wave, with a cover letter, was mailed November 28, 1987. A second mailing, with another copy of the questionnaire and a follow-up letter, was mailed January 2, 1988. A reminder post card was sent two weeks later.

In 16 cases the questionnaire could not be forwarded. Another 206 respondents returned the questionnaire with a notification that they were not working journalists. They were excluded from the sample. Of the remaining 653 respondents, 326 returned valid questionnaires, a response rate of 50 percent.

Many of the respondents accepted an invitation to comment on the questionnaire, and several were selected for follow-up telephone calls.

Since selection of respondents from SPJ,SDX rolls might bias the sample somewhat toward organizational joiners, four questions were replicated from an earlier study by Burgoon, Burgoon, Buller and Atkin(41). The earlier study had access to entire newsrooms for their samples. Two behavioral questions and two opinion questions were selected for replication.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. In addition to descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations were performed on selected variables. Differences of proportions tests were performed on selected variables in the cross-tabulations. The margin of error of the sample was 6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics are included with the copy of the questionnaire in Appendix A. The 326 respondents may slightly underrepresent journalists younger than 35 (48.5 percent), overrepresent journalists with less than three years' experience (53.7 percent), and overrepresent journalists working for Top 20 broadcast stations (one-third of broadcast respondents). The differences were judged too small to justify weighting the responses.

In terms of the four questions replicated from the Burgoon, Burgoon, Buller and Atkin study, the present sample appeared to be a little more involved in the community on the behavioral questions but virtually identical with the earlier study on the attitudinal questions.

Table 1 suggests that the 326 respondents in this study may not be fully representative of the typical news organization staff in that they may have a little more contact with persons outside of their professional relationships. On the other hand, the two

opinion questions suggest that the attitudes of the SPJ,SDX sample were strikingly similar to attitudes of journalists selected in a way to include the entire staffs of certain newspapers.

TABLE 1

Comparing Respondents with Earlier Study

Item	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Behavior			
I have a lot of contact with people in walks of life very different from my own.			
Burgoon et al.	62%	20%	18%
Current SPJ,SDX sample	78%	10%	12%
Nonjournalists often ask my opinion about things in the news.			
Burgoon et al.	68%	18%	14%
Current SPJ,SDX sample	82%	11%	7%
Opinion			
I think journalists should be involved with outside groups and activities.			
Burgoon et al.	46%	27%	27%
Current SPJ,SDX sample	48%	29%	23%
I feel discussion of news events is best kept in the office.			
Burgoon et al.	10%	14%	76%
Current SPJ,SDX sample	11%	9%	80%

Group Membership

Because the respondents were drawn from a Society of Professional Journalists, SDX, mailing list, it is not surprising that virtually all of them claimed membership in that organization. But virtually all respondents (all but 15) were members of another organization besides. More than half were members of other professional associations or of religious organizations. Two hundred three respondents said they were members of another professional organization, including 109 who claimed to be a regular participant, quite active member, or leader. Members of religious organizations comprised 182 respondents, including 114 who were regular participants, quite active members or leaders (see Table 2).

There was reasonably strong participation in four other types of organizations. Those groups to which more than 40 percent of respondents belonged were civic, cultural, special interest or recreational. Less than 25 percent claimed membership in a political organization, and less than 10 percent claimed membership in a veterans organization.

To draw a contrast between high participation and low participation in group membership, two extremes in the sample were compared. Those with high participation were identified as totaling seven or more points when two points were assigned for being a regular participant, quite active or a leader and one point was assigned for being a rare participant or nominal member. These individuals had to belong to at least four organizations and

TABLE 2

Group Memberships of Respondents

Type of Group	Active Participant	Rare Participant	Not Member
Society of Professional Journalists,SDX	78	233	11
Other professional asscciation	109	94	116
Civic organization	82	47	186
Cultural organization	63	70	180
Political organization	20	53	243
Veterans organization	7	14	291
Special interest organization	75	44	193
Recreational organization	94	54	169
Religious organization	114	66	138

be active in three of them. Low participation respondents scored three or less on the above scale. They could not be active in more than one organization.

Those with high participation were more likely to be managers than those with low participation ($X2=30.2$, $d.f.=4$, $p.<.001$), more likely to be 35 years of age or older ($X2=15.4$, $d.f.=6$, $p.<.02$), more likely to have worked in journalism for more than four years ($X2=15.8$, $d.f.=4$, $p.<.003$), and more likely to have lived 11 or more years in the community ($X2=15.3$, $d.f.=6$, $p.<.02$).

Beyond group participation, there were few opinion or behavioral measures in which there were significant differences between respondents in the high participation and low participation categories. One was fairly obvious. Those with high participation more readily agreed with the statement: "I think journalists should be involved with community groups." ($X2=43.6$, $d.f.=4$, $p.<.001$). They were more apt to have "a lot of contact with people in walks of life very different from my own." ($X2=11.0$, $d.f.=4$, $p.<.03$). They also agreed most readily with the statement: "I find myself defending or explaining to associates in the newsroom the positions and practices of organizations which I support." ($X2=10.6$, $d.f.=4$, $p.<.03$).

Time constraints as well as lack of desire may be a reason why some journalists do not get involved in the community.

A New Hampshire editor and columnist noted: "Any time I make a commitment, I end up having to work that night."

One of the objectives of this study was to determine if high group participation in the community would produce "reference group" associations which might conflict with the respondent's professional "reference group." Five hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1--Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to perceive community agreement with their views on community issues.

Hypothesis 1 was generally not supported by the data. The view that high participation respondents would perceive more agreement in the community with their views on community issues was true for only one item--expression of one's personal religious convictions. Those with stronger community ties were more likely to see the community supportive of their religious views (although 55% were regarded "neutral") than those with weaker group associations. The latter anticipated that 43 percent of the community would be neutral toward their religious views, but 88 percent of the rest were perceived to be hostile.

Hypothesis 2--Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to perceive newsroom disagreement with their views on community issues.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported by the data, as shown in Table 3. The trend was in the direction of the hypothesis, but the differences between high and low community participation respondents was generally not significant. Significant differences were obtained in two categories: Active members of recreational organizations perceived more newsroom disagreement than non-members with their views on personal conflicts of interest ($X2=5.2$, d.f. 1, $p<.02$), and active members of other professional organizations were more apt to perceive disagreement with their choice for president ($X2=4.5$, d.f. 1, $p<.03$). Generally, those with low community participation anticipated more favorable sentiment for their opinions in the newsroom than those with extensive outside contacts.

Examining the obverse--perceived support in the community--offered slight evidence of the direction perceived in tests of Hypothesis 2. Non-members of religious organizations were almost three times as likely to perceive disagreement with their religious convictions from the community

as active members ($X^2=24.2$, d.f. 1, $p<.0001$). Active members of political organizations perceived more support from the community with their views on their organizations's news performance than did non-members ($X^2=5.2$, d.f. 1, $p.<.02$). But other differences were not significant.

Hypothesis 3: Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to perceive newsroom disagreement with their views on community issues.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported by an item on personal/professional conflicts of interest in Table 3. Those with high community participation did not express any particular sense of difficulty caused by conflicting loyalties, roles or expectations brought about by their membership in community groups as well as their occupation as journalists. There was one exception: Active members of civic organizations were more apt to disagree with the statement that "journalists can withstand conflicts of interest through adherence to normal standards of accuracy, fairness, thoroughness and objectivity," ($X^2=5.4$, d.f. 1, $p.<.02$) There was a slight indication among active members of religious organizations that their dual memberships caused friction. They were more likely than non-members to defend their news organizations to the community ($X^2=5.6$, d.f. 1, $p.<.02$). However, active religious members did not differ significantly from non-members in agreement with the statement "I find myself defending or explaining to associates in the newsroom the positions and practices of organizations which I support."

Hypothesis 4: Respondents with high participation in the community will be more likely than those with low participation to express their views on community issues to persons in the community.

Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the data (see Table 3). There were generally no statistical differences in either the community or the newsroom between the percentage of respondents from the high and low community participation groups who recalled expressing their views on the

selected issues during the last year. Those with high community participation tended to be more likely to express their views in the community than their peers with low community participation, but not to the extent that the null hypothesis could be rejected. In one category, active members of religious organizations, there was less likelihood of expressing views on AIDS in the community if they perceived disagreement with those views ($X2=4.1$, d.f. 1, $p.<.04$).

Hypothesis 5: Respondents with high participation in professional and community groups will be more willing to express their beliefs in the newsroom than those with low participation, regardless of whether the respondent perceives support for his or her views in the newsroom.

Table 3 suggests that those respondents with high participation in the community were more likely than those with low participation to sense comparable agreement with their views in the newsroom and in the community, but in most instances the differences were not significant. Those with low community participation consistently perceived the newsroom to be more supportive of their views than those in the community, but again the difference wasn't statistically significant. One condition yielded a significant difference: Non-members of political organizations were less likely to express their choice for president in the newsroom than active members when they perceived that agreement with their views was unlikely ($X2=6.8$, d.f. 1, $p.<.009$). Active members of religious organizations were more likely than non-members to express their religious views in the newsroom and the community (40 percent versus 19 percent in the newsroom, 56 percent versus 30 percent in the community). The difference appears substantial but was not significant because of small cell sizes.

TABLE 3

High/Low Participant in Community Comparisons:
Pct. of Respondents Who Perceive Disagreement with Views,
Pct. of Respondents Who Recall of Expressing Views During Past Year

	In The Newsroom		In The Community	
Item	Pct. Seeing Disagreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out	Pct. Seeing Disagreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out
HIGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT				
Your presidential choice	22%	49%	22%	45%
News org. performance	11%	92%	23%	61%
Combatting AIDS	11%	44%	14%	45%
Personal religious views	22%	29%	17%***	40%
Sexual discrimination	12%	68%	13%	55%
Personal/prof. conflict	12%	63%	18%	54%
LOW COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT				
Your presidential choice	14%	47%	28%	38%
News org. performance	8%	86%	14%	65%
Combatting AIDS	8%	33%	15%	28%
Personal religious views	29%	22%	35%***	36%
Sexual discrimination	8%	54%	7%	42%
Personal/prof. conflict	11%	47%	22%	43%

***High/Low participant difference significant at .001 level.

Respondents with high community participation tended to have expressed themselves more in the newsroom and in the community than the others. To some degree this could represent the "talkers" identified by Burgoon, Burgoon, Buller and Atkin. Although the percentages for those with high community participation were consistently higher than for the others in terms or recalled instances of expression of viewpoints, the differences were not large.

A Kentucky journalist attempted to strike a balance between community involvement and conflict of interest. He commented:

"I don't believe journalists should wall themselves off from the community. At the same time, journalists must avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. Journalists should avoid expressing strong opinions to the public, but discussing news events helps me to know the way others interpret events about which I write."

Community Attachment

Prior studies have found differences in attitudes among "young transients" and "older natives" in samples of newspaper journalists.(42) This study replicated such distinctions, differentiating between respondents who had been in their communities no longer than five years and anticipated staying there no longer than five years ("young transients") and those who had been in the community for more than 10 years and anticipated staying there another 10 years ("older natives").

There were 89 "young transients" identified in this study. They differed significantly from 83 "older natives" in that they were much more likely to be reporters, photographers or other staff members than management ($X2=5.0$, $d.f.=1$, $p.<.05$); more likely to be under the age of 35

(X2=65.9, d.f.=2, p.<.001); had fewer years of employment (X2=81.1, d.f.=1, p.<.001); and were employed at smaller broadcasting stations (X2=7.5, d.f.=1, p.<.01) or smaller newspapers (X2=6.9, d.f.=1, p.<.01). The study projected three hypotheses regarding "young transients" and "older natives":

Hypothesis 6--Respondents identified as "young transients" will have significantly less participation than "older natives" in community organizations.

Table 4 shows the organizational membership of the 89 "young transients" and 83 "older natives". A significantly lower percentage of "young transients" were members of "other professional," civic, cultural and veteran's organizations. This trend is also evident to a lesser extent for other types of organizations. Essentially, Hypothesis 6 is supported by the data.

An example of a well-connected "older native" was a Texas physician and medical reporter for a television station. He reported that he was on community boards, committees and a college task force.

"I'm a lot more conservative than the majority of my peers in the newsroom," he said. "I'm about 10 years older. The average age is 27. Most people who work for television are not involved in (outside community) things. Sometimes anchors are pressed into public speaking, but it's such a transient profession. I've only been in this city about 12 years, but most broadcasters never make it that far--3 or 4 years."

The New Hampshire editor and columnist expressed a similar view in terms of his newspaper associates: "A lot has to do with the fact that we come and go--people spend a year to two years here. It's hard to become, or feel, a part of the community. You don't have the connections to draw you in."

TABLE 4

Organizational Membership of 'Young Transients,' 'Older Natives'

	Young Transients		Older Natives	
Organization	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
SPJ, SDX	82	93%	80	99%
Other professional	44	50%*	56	62%
Civic	25	28%**	42	53%
Cultural	30	34%*	34	43%
Political	18	20%	22	28%
Veterans	4	5%	11	14%
Special interest	32	36%	32	40%
Recreational	41	47%	39	49%
Religious	53	60%	56	70%

**Difference at the .01 level between newsroom and community responses.
*Difference at the .05 level between newsroom and community responses.

Hypothesis 7--"Young transients" will be significantly less likely to perceive community agreement with their viewpoints than "older natives."

Hypothesis 7 was supported in four of six instances. Among "Young transients," 57% anticipated that friends and associates in the community would disagree on their choice for president in 1988 as compared with 41% of "older natives" perceiving such disagreement. For news organization performance, 47% of "young transients" perceived disagreement in the community as compared with 38% of "older natives." For their view on combatting AIDS, 38% of "young transients" projected disagreement as compared to 23% for "older natives." For personal/professional conflicts of interest, 50% of "young transients" perceived community disagreement as compared with 39% for "older natives." On the other hand, "young transients" perceived less community disagreement to their views on sexual harrassment in the workplace and on personal religious convictions than did "older natives." Only 9% of the "young transients" projected disagreement on sexual harrassment in the workplace as compared to 20% of "older natives." For personal religious convictions, 39% of "young transients" anticipated disagreement as compared to 41% of "older natives"--in this case, no real difference between the two. The mixed results suggest that differences between "young transients" and "older natives" in perceiving agreement or disagreement among their community friends and associates is situational. Hypothesis 7 cannot be supported as a general rule.

Hypothesis 8--"Young transients" will perceive more distance between themselves and the community than "older natives" on items that project respondent-community affinity.

Hypothesis 8 was not supported by the responses on items designed to measure perceived distance between the journalists and the community. For instance, there was no distinction between the responses of "young transients" and "older natives" on the item: "I think journalists should be involved in community groups."

There was only one item designed to measure community distance in which "young transients" differed significantly from "older natives." "Young transients" generally disagreed with the statement: "Generally, the readers/viewers of my news organization share my values." ($X2=7.6$, d.f.=1, $p.<.01$). This mirrored a finding by Gaziano and McGrath, who found on a number of measures that "young transients" tended to remove themselves further from the public they serve than other journalists.(43)

Hypothesis 9--"Young transients" will be less likely to express their beliefs in the community than in the newsroom.

Hypothesis 9 was not supported by the data in Table 5. Again, the item on personal religious conviction was in the opposite direction. There were 55 percent of the "young transients" who recalled expressing their religious convictions in the community during the year as compared with only 29 percent for "older natives." This was true even though 70 percent of the "older natives" were members of religious organizations as compared to 60 percent for the "young transients."

TABLE 5

'Young Transients' and 'Older Natives' Comparisons:
Pct. of Respondents Perceiving Disagreement With Views,
Pct. of Respondents Recalling Expression of Views During Past Year

YOUNG TRANSIENTS

	In The Newsroom		In The Community	
Item	Pct. Seeing Disagreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out	Pct. Seeing Disagreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out
Your presidential choice	30%	58%	57%	46%
News org. performance	6%	94%	47%	65%
Combatting AIDS	16%	44%	38%	42%
Personal religious views	70%	42%	39%	55%
Sexual discrimination	11%	55%	9%	39%
Personal/prof. conflict	16%	57%	50%	49%

OLDER NATIVES

	In The Newsroom		In The Community	
Item	Pct. Seeing Disagreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out	Pct. Seeing Disagreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out
Your presidential choice	39%	41%	41%	35%
News org. performance	8%	87%	38%	55%
Combatting AIDS	20%	36%	23%	51%
Personal religious views	55%	18%	41%	29%
Sexual discrimination	17%	61%	20%	45%
Personal/prof. conflict	32%	56%	39%	43%

Spiral of Silence

Hypothesis 10--Respondents who perceive agreement with their beliefs on an issue, either in the newsroom or the community, will be more likely to have discussed the issue in that setting than those who perceived disagreement with their views.

There were some responses which suggest support for Hypothesis 10 (see Tables 6 and 7). The table is based upon the respondents projecting the likelihood in which their friends and associates in the newsroom or the community would agree with their opinions during the discussion of several topics. These projections were then compared with earlier responses in which the respondent was asked to recall instances in the last year, either in the newsroom or the community, in which they expressed their view on those topics. In several instances, those who perceived agreement with their views on items were more likely to speak out on those items than those who perceived disagreement. In the newsroom, for instance, this was true for several issues. Percentages speaking out included 59 percent who perceived agreement for their choice for president as compared to 40 percent who perceived disagreement; 94 percent for those who perceived agreement on their organization's daily performance as compared to 80 percent who perceived disagreement; 59 percent for those who perceived agreement on their religious convictions compared to 40 percent who perceived disagreement; 68 percent who perceived agreement on personal/professional conflict of interest as compared to 55 percent who did not.

In the community, there was much less evidence of interaction on public issues. Neutrality was the most prevalent response for five of the six items. This may be due to the absence of a "don't know" column on the questionnaire. Several respondents criticized the survey for this

omission. The five issues in which most respondents projected neutrality in assessing the views of friends and associates in the community were: choice for president in 1988, his or her news organization's daily performance, view on combatting AIDS, personal religious convictions, and conflicts of interest between his or her personal and professional life. In only one case, sexual discrimination in the workplace, did the projection of "likely agreement" have more responses than did neutrality.

After full analysis of the data, Hypothesis 10 was not supported because of unpredictable results regarding those who perceived their associates in the newsroom or the community to be neutral. Rather than falling between the responses of those who perceived newsroom/community associates to be positive or negative toward their views in terms of speaking out on an issue, those who perceived neutral responses were often at the extreme position in terms of silence.

There appeared to be a continuum of public and private issues. The more private the issue, the more likely large number of respondents voiced no opinion as to whether their associates in the newsroom or the community supported or opposed their views. The higher the neutral response, the less likely were the respondents to recall talking about the issue.

This was particularly true when respondents were asked to answer items about their personal religious convictions. Fifty-three percent of the respondents perceived their associates in the newsroom as neutral to their views on this issue. Only 31 percent recalled expressing their views on their religious convictions in the last year.

A California reporter noted religion was seldom a subject of discussion in the newsroom. "I know few journalists who admit to involvement in a religious organization," she commented. "Maybe at the family level (it's acceptable)."

A writer on a weekly Nevada paper, an active member in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said: "I generally don't bring up religion in the newsroom. I've never brought it up unless it's something newsworthy I find in the community."

When religion moves onto the news agenda, it appears to offer an opportunity for newsroom discussion.

A feature editor on a Virginia paper, actively involved in the Episcopal Church, said, "You don't go on about what you believe," adding:

"We've got several diehard Republicans (in the newsroom) so we don't talk about politics and religion. I've always had a hard time talking with people about my religion until recently--in the last year. Moral Majority and terribly conservative fundamentalist types seem to shove things down people's throats. The newsroom is more liberal than almost any place where people gather."

Journalists followed a private-to-public continuum on topics covered by the questionnaire. In the newsroom there was a direct relationship between neutral perceptions of agreement and low incidences of expressing their views in the newsroom on issues. Expression of religious convictions was the most privately treated item on the questionnaire. Next in the private-to-public progression were: View on combatting AIDS, choice for president, conflicts of interest between personal and professional life, and sexual discrimination in the workplace. The most publicly treated item was the news organization's daily performance. On this item, virtually

all of the respondents perceived agreement with their views in the newsroom and only 9 percent failed to recall an instance of expressing their views on the topic during the last year.

In the community, personal religious faith was again perceived to be the most private of issues. Most respondents perceived others to be neutral to their views on this item and fewer of them recalled instances during the year when they expressed their view on the subject. Next in line in terms of privacy treatment were three topics of about equal sensitivity--AIDS, choice for president, and personal/professional conflicts of interest. Respondents were more likely to perceive agreement with their views on the two items involving sexual discrimination in the workplace and news organization performance, although they were no more likely to talk about sex discrimination than on the three second-tier items. In the community as well as the newsroom, respondents were most likely to talk about news organization performance.

Tables 6 and 7 show that perceptions of neutrality rather than perceptions of disagreement with one's views on issues is much more likely to predict the respondent's not recalling incidents of speaking out on those issues. This is obviously measuring something else than the spiral of silence. It suggests that some items on the questionnaire are perceived more appropriate for the exchange of viewpoints than others. If an item, such as personal religious convictions, is considered "off limits" for discussion, it becomes rather difficult to determine who favors or opposes one's view on the subject.

TABLE 6

Perceived Agreement or Disagreement on Issues
Compared with Recall of Expression of Views During Past Year

In The Newsroom

Topic	Perceived Agreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out
Your choice for president in 1988	Highly unlikely (22)	36%
	Unlikely (51)	41%
	Neutral (107)	44%
	Likely (110)	59%
	Highly likely (19)	58%
Your view on your news organization's daily performance	Highly unlikely (3)	33%
	Unlikely (31)	87%
	Neutral (37)	84%
	Likely (162)	94%
	Highly likely (81)	93%
Your view on combatting AIDS	Highly unlikely (11)	45%
	Unlikely (20)	60%
	Neutral (121)	26%
	Likely (111)	55%
	Highly likely (39)	67%
Your personal religious convictions	Highly unlikely (30)	37%
	Unlikely (58)	41%
	Neutral (159)	20%
	Likely (43)	47%
	Highly likely (11)	55%
Your beliefs about sexual discrimination in the workplace	Highly unlikely (12)	67%
	Unlikely (25)	76%
	Neutral (70)	37%
	Likely (136)	73%
	Highly likely (66)	70%
What you see as conflicts of interest between your personal life and your professional life	Highly unlikely (12)	33%
	Unlikely (32)	63%
	Neutral (89)	38%
	Likely (124)	65%
	Highly likely (50)	78%

TABLE 7

Perceived Agreement or Disagreement on Issues
Compared with Recall of Expression of Views During Past Year

In The Community

Topic	Perceived Agreement	Pct. Who Spoke Out
Your choice for president in 1988	Highly unlikely (17)	41%
	Unlikely (64)	47%
	Neutral (131)	37%
	Likely (85)	47%
	Highly likely (15)	40%
Your view of your news organization's daily performance	Highly unlikely (11)	33%
	Unlikely (65)	62%
	Neutral (116)	59%
	Likely (93)	66%
	Highly Likely (21)	67%
Your view on combatting AIDS	Highly unlikely (14)	21%
	Unlikely (34)	38%
	Neutral (132)	25%
	Likely (95)	46%
	Highly likely (28)	71%
Your personal religious convictions	Highly unlikely (28)	50%
	Unlikely (38)	45%
	Neutral (151)	32%
	Likely (71)	58%
	Highly likely (17)	59%
Your beliefs about sexual discrimination in the workplace	Highly unlikely (10)	10%
	Unlikely (28)	43%
	Neutral (98)	33%
	Likely (131)	47%
	Highly likely (42)	69%
What you see as conflicts of interest between your personal life and your professional life	Highly unlikely (22)	41%
	Unlikely (51)	61%
	Neutral (128)	36%
	Likely (76)	58%
	Highly likely (30)	63%

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The 326 respondents taken from the Society of Professional Journalists, SDX, mailing list included large numbers who participated in one or more community organization. While professional organizations had the greatest support, more than half of the respondents belonged to religious organizations. Those who did were almost twice as likely to be an active participant than a rare or nominal participant. Large number of respondents also belonged to civic, cultural, special interest and recreational organizations. Fewer journalists were members of political organizations, and those who belonged were not likely to be active participants.

Community organization participation did not significantly affect the willingness of respondents to speak out on public or personal concerns, either in the newsroom or the community. The presumption that those with community reference groups would be more willing to discuss potentially controversial issues in the community was not supported.

The study revealed that only 15 respondents were members of no other organizations besides the Society of Professional Journalists, SDX. Active SPJ members found community friends no less supportive than their friends in the newsroom, and no less supportive than nominal SPJ members found them. Overall, a majority of respondents reported discussing news events with people in the community, and having frequent contact with other professions. A majority disagreed with a statement that their closest friends were journalists.

But there is evidence that certain topics and associations remain beyond the pale in the newsroom. While half of the respondents indicated they discussed their presidential preferences in the newsroom, active participation in political organizations was rare among them, not surprising considering the ethical proscriptions of many mass media outlets. Given the traditional model of news reporting in the United States, the apparent reluctance by journalists to present themselves with a potential conflict of interest is understandable and probably laudable.

Questionnaire responses showed that for all but one item that those respondents with low community participation were no more likely than those with active involvement to perceive disagreement with their viewpoints by those in the community. The one exception was personal religious convictions. Those with low community involvement anticipated that 35 percent of community members would disagree with their personal religious convictions. This perceived difference was twice the size as that for those with active organizational ties in the community.

However, examination of the data used to test the spiral of silence-based hypothesis showed that most respondents perceived both those in the newsroom and in the community to be neutral to their religious views and indicated they did not discuss such views in either setting. Failure to discuss one's view on an item seemed to hinge less upon perceived agreement or disagreement with one's religious beliefs than it did upon the degree to which the item might be considered a private or public issue.

The item on religious views was the only case in which journalists were more likely to discuss the topic in the community than in the newsroom. On all other topics respondents anticipated very little disagreement with their views in the newsroom and reported more instances of talking about the items there than in the community during the past year.

Interestingly, participation in a religious organization seemed to bear no relationship to willingness to express one's view on personal religious faith, either in the community or in the newsroom. While respondents with low involvement in religious organizations perceived greater disagreement in the community with their religious views, they were just as likely to talk about their personal religious convictions in the community as those with high involvement.

In the community setting, religious views were considered the most potentially controversial issue among those listed. Next was preferences in the presidential campaign. The issue in which greatest harmony of viewpoint was anticipated was that of sexual discrimination in the workplace.

Although grouping respondents by the extent of organizational membership did not produce many meaningful differences, there were more interesting comparisons possible when respondents were grouped into the extremes of 89 "young transients" and 83 "older natives."

In this instance, the "older natives" drew very little distinction between the newsroom and the community in terms of perceived disagreement with their viewpoints. In four of six instances, however, the "young transients" perceived greater harmony with their views in the newsroom and greater disagreement with their views in the community. The lone exception--personal religious convictions--was an interesting one. In this instance, the "young transients" perceived twice the disagreement with their views in the newsroom as they did in the community.

In terms of expression of viewpoints, the "young transients" were not as inhibited as the "older natives" about speaking of their religious convictions in the newsroom. More than half of the "young transients" recalled talking about their religious convictions in the community while

only 3 of 10 "older natives" said they had done so. Perceived disagreement was not a factor in this difference. "Young transients" anticipated that 39 percent of the community would disagree with their religious convictions while "older natives" perceived that 41 percent would disagree with theirs.

The finding on religious convictions seems to conflict with the "reference group" theory. A greater number of "older natives" had a religious "reference group," since 70 percent of them reported membership in a religious organization. The involvement difference was not as great as anticipated, however, since 60 percent of the "young transients" reported such a religious affiliation. It was the most likely community association, beyond SPJ,SDX, for the "young transient" respondents.

While both sets of respondents expected little disagreement with their views on their news organization's performance in newsroom discussions, both "young transients" and "older natives" anticipated more disagreement in the community. In each case, however, news organization performance was the topic that the largest percentage of respondents recalled discussing in either the newsroom and the community.

Our sample of journalists begins with one degree of affiliation bias. All of the respondents were taken from the membership rolls of SPJ,SDX. To that degree the sample differs from those studies which interviewed all members of a newspaper staff. Replication of four questions from an earlier study shows that the SPJ,SDX sample may have had slightly more linkage with the community than newsmen selected without such an affiliation, but items on opinions about journalist-community relations were virtually identical in the two studies.

With that caveat in mind, the study's questionnaire data lent little support to the critic's stereotype of newsrooms as outposts of arrogance displaying a fortress mentality. In interviews, some of our respondents

expressed views close to such claims--perhaps reflecting industry concerns over the isolation issue in the past few years.

A Seattle editor commented, "I think without a doubt the journalistic field is too eclectic, too incestuous, and out of touch with what is going on in the world. We listen to other journalists and not to other people. It's almost an obligation to a journalist to find out what is really going on and what people really think. People (journalists) have stopped doing this."

This study attempted to test 10 hypotheses based upon assumptions that journalists who felt isolation from the community would somehow reflect an "out of touch" quality when discussing their relations with those outside the newsroom. In virtually every case such assumptions were not supported and the hypotheses could not be substantiated.

The findings indicate that the Seattle editor, and others whose pessimistic views have been depicted in earlier studies, may be too hard on their peers. However, the data did suggest a strong bent toward neutrality when projecting the opinions of others. In the newsroom, projections of neutrality with one's view was the most frequent response on two items--view on combatting AIDS and personal religious convictions. Neutrality ran a close second to "likely agreement" for the item on personal choice for president.

There is evidence that the newsroom environment is not deemed suitable for sharing one's religious convictions, even among those with relatively strong religious affiliations. While a majority of respondents in the present study claimed to be a member of a religious organization, and nearly half of those claimed active membership, speaking out on their religious beliefs in the newsroom was rarer than any other form of

expression examined. It was the only area in which respondents were less likely to express an opinion in the newsroom than in the community. Skepticism is a journalist's tool as much as a note pad or camera; proselytizing is an important element of many religious faiths. There may not be adequate space for both in the newsroom. Active religious members did not defend their organizations in the newsroom significantly more frequently than non-members. Interviews with respondents who had active religious affiliations suggest that they considered such defense either uncomfortable or inappropriate.

On the other hand, the study showed respondents who were active in religious groups tended to defend their news organizations to the community more often than did members of other groups. This may indicate they felt a greater need to do so because of expressions of news media distrust by well-known religious figures.

Active defense of the news media in a potentially hostile setting is the reverse of the spiral of silence theory. The study's hypothesis to test this theory was not as strongly supported as might be expected. Instead, the item about personal religious convictions reflected a chicken-and-egg type of cycle. One doesn't know others' religious views because the subject isn't discussed. Or, one doesn't discuss religion because one doesn't know the viewpoints of others. In interviews, it was evident that many of our respondents directly contributed to this lack of knowledge by purposefully keeping religious views to themselves.

The study also suggests the importance of occupational roles in determining reference group behavior. Virtually all of the respondents claim they find themselves defending media practices to members of the community, but less than 20 percent claimed they defended community organization positions and practices to associates in the newsroom.

"Young transients" sense they find more agreement with their views in the newsroom than in the community. This finding, supported by earlier studies, is potentially disturbing. It suggests that those who most need to know the communities in which they work feel the least affinity with them. However, the isolation of these young journalists from community associations was not as extensive as predicted. Their expression of informal community interaction showed little difference from those who had greater membership affiliations.

It would be ironic if journalists, who have a strong professional commitment to the "free marketplace of ideas," would support a work environment in which certain topics were considered taboo. This study showed that for a majority of respondents the agenda for newsroom discussions included the daily performance of the news organization, sexual discrimination in the workplace, and personal/professional conflicts of interest. Nearly half of the respondents also recalled expressing their views on their choice for president and on AIDS. It was only the most private of issues, personal religious convictions, where 7 of 10 respondents did not recall expressing their views.

Both the questionnaire data and follow-up telephone conversations with a few of the respondents reveal a desire on the part of journalists to keep in touch with their communities. The tradition of journalistic detachment did not seem to be so strong that it resulted in the suppression of ideas. However, the survey was taken at a time when exposures of the moral failures of television evangelists were on the news agenda, and there was some anecdotal evidence that televangelism, at least, was handled with a good bit of cynicism. One Texas newspaper writer, active in her church, commented, "In our bureau, we filed 'evangelists' under 'c' for 'crazy evangelists'."

The relationship between journalistic detachment, skepticism and cynicism remains an important one. Journalists distance themselves from partisans in order to insure fairness and objectivity. If such detachment slips past neutrality into deliberate hostility, then the profession is ill-served.

Further studies might do well to continue to probe the validity of this study's distinction between a perception of appropriate privacy and the spiral of silence. Why did respondents in this study who perceived neutrality (possibly a "don't know" response) on the part of associates toward their beliefs on certain sensitive issues report less likelihood of expressing their beliefs openly than those who perceived disagreement with their beliefs? It appears to be a rare and intriguing finding.

FOOTNOTES

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(38) Salmon and Kline, op. cit.

(39) Burgoon and Ruffner, op. cit.

(40) Gannett Center for Media Studies, "The Media and The People," working paper (1985), p. 13.

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(42) Gaziano and McGrath, op. cit., p. 325.

(43) Ibid.

Appendix A

JOURNALIST-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Respondent Eligibility:
__I am currently involved in news/editorial work N=326
__I am NOT involved in news/editorial work

(Note: If you are NOT involved in news/editorial work, check appropriate item above and return the questionnaire. If you ARE involved in news/editorial work, please answer the following questions.)

Medium: 62.5% Newspaper 9.5% Magazine 4.4% Radio 13.2 T.V. 9.8 Other____

Position: 37.9 Photographer, reporter
36 Middle level (anchor, editor below executive)
23 Executive (managing editor, news director, or higher)

Gender: 60.9 Male 38.2 Female

Age: 6.6 Below 25 17.0 25-29 24.9 30-34 22.7 35-44 20.5 45-60 8.2 61 and above

How long with present employer: 25.9 Less than year 27.8 1 to 3 years 18.0 4 to 10 years 16.1 11 to 20 years 10.4 More than 20 years

About how long have you lived in your community?
36 5 years or less 16.1 6 to 10 years 21.1 11 to 20 years 26.2 More than 20

Just your best guess--about how many more years do you plan to remain in the community in which you live now?
44.8 5 years or less 18.6 6 to 10 years 13.6 11 to 20 years 20.8 More than 20 years

Market size/Circulation:
(Broadcast) 7.9 Top 20 5.4 Top 1-50 4.1 Top 51-100 3.5 Below Top 100
(Print) 33.8 More than 100,000 12.3 40,001 to 100,000
13.9 25,001 to 40,000 13.9 25,000 or less
(Other) 9.5 National 1.6 State 6.0 Local

Please use the scale below to describe your role in professional, community or religious organizations: 5=Leader; 4=Quite active; 3=Regular participant; 2=Rare participant; 1=Nominal Member; 0=Not a member.

	5	4	3	2	1	0
SPJ,SDX	7.6	5.4	11.7	32.8	38.2	3.5
Other professional organization	8.5	10.7	15.1	12.9	16.1	34.7

Civic organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	7.6	6.6	11.7	7.9	6.6	56.5
Cultural organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	2.2	6.0	11.7	9.1	11.7	55.5
Political organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	.6	1.6	4.1	5.7	10.7	74.4
Veterans organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	4.1	.6	1.6	1.3	2.8	89.6
Special interest organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	6.9	5.7	10.7	6.6	6.9	59.0
Recreational organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	2.2	10.1	17.4	9.8	6.9	51.1
Religious organization	5	4	3	2	1	0
	6.9	12.0	17.0	10.0	10.7	41.6

Can you recall an instance in the last year, either in the newsroom or in the community, when you expressed your views on any of the following:

Topic	In newsroom	In community
Your choice for president in 1988	47.9	42.6
Your view of your news organization's daily performance	89.6	61.2
Your view on combatting AIDS	42.0	36.0
Your personal religious convictions	30.1	42.0
Your beliefs about sexual discrimination in the workplace	61.5	42.8
What you see as conflicts of interest between your personal life and your professional life	55.5	47.6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My friends in the community are more supportive of my beliefs than my friends in the newsroom.	8.2	27.4	44.2	12.3	5.4
Nonjournalists often ask my opinion about things in the news.	1.6	5.4	9.5	50.8	31.5
I think journalists should be involved with community groups.	7.6	15.1	27.4	35.3	12.9
I feel discussion of news events is best kept in the office.	41.3	38.8	7.3	6.0	4.7
I find myself defending and explaining media practices to people in the community.	1.9	3.8	6.6	58.7	28.1
Nonjournalists often tell me their opinion about things in the news.	.6	3.5	3.8	59.6	31.9
I have a lot of contact with people in walks of life very different from my own.	1.3	10.1	9.5	44.5	34.4
Journalists individually can express their opinion on issues but should refrain from joining any organization that advocates positions on issues.	7.3	18.9	14.2	33.4	24.9
Journalists can withstand conflicts of interest through adherence to normal standards of accuracy, fairness, thoroughness and objectivity.	3.5	18.0	9.5	49.9	18.1
I find myself defending or explaining to associates in the newsroom the positions and practices of organizations which I support.	21.3	38.0	24.0	12.8	3.8
The people I know the best or feel closest to are journalists.	12.6	40.4	16.4	22.4	7.2
Generally, the readers/viewers of my news organization share my values.	3.2	20.8	41.8	27.4	6.8

Just your best guess, what is the likelihood of your friends and associates in the newsroom agreeing with your opinions during a discussion of the following topics? Separately, what is the likelihood of your friends and associates in the community agreeing with your opinions?

Use the following scale for your answers: (5=Highly likely, 4=Likely, 3=Neutral, 2=Unlikely, 1=Highly unlikely). Please circle correct response.

Use scale, 5-1, explained above in making your response:	In Newsroom					In Community				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Your choice for president in 1988	5.4	34.7	31.9	16.1	6.9	4.4	26.5	40.4	19.2	5.4
Your view of your news organization's daily performance	24.6	49.8	11.7	9.5	.9	6.6	23.4	35.3	20.2	3.5
Your view on combatting AIDS	11.7	33.8	27.9	6.0	3.5	8.8	23.4	44.3	10.1	4.4
Your personal religious convictions	3.5	12.9	48.6	18.3	9.1	5.0	21.8	46.4	11.7	8.8
Your beliefs about sexual discrimination in the workplace	20.2	41.6	22.1	7.6	3.8	13.6	41.0	29.7	8.8	3.8
What you see as conflicts of interest between your personal life and your professional life	15.8	37.2	23.1	10.1	3.8	4.1	24.0	20.4	15.1	6.9

APPENDIX B

Perceived Disagreement with Respondent Viewpoint In Newsroom, Plus Recall of Speaking Out on Item During Last Year

Item: 326 respondents	Pct. Thought To Disagree With Respondent	Pct. Who Spoke To Others About Views
Your choice for president in 1988	22%	48%
Your view of your news organization's daily performance	10%	90%
Your view for combatting AIDS	10%	43%
Your personal religious convictions	27%	30%
Your beliefs about sexual discrimination in the workplace	11%	61%
What you see as conflicts of interest between your personal life and your professional life	13%	56%

APPENDIX C

Perceived Disagreement with Respondent Views in Community, Plus Recall of Speaking Out on Item During Last Year

Item: 316 Respondents	Pct. Thought To Disagree With Respondent	Pct. Spoke To Others About Views
Your choice for president in 1988	25%	42%
Your view of your news organization's daily performance	21%	61%
Your view on combatting AIDS	15%	36%
Your personal religious convictions	20%	41%
Your beliefs about sexual discrimination in the workplace	12%	44%
What you see as conflicts of interest between your personal life and your professional life	22%	46%